
SHREWSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BUS PASS & FEE-BASED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR TOWN-PAID (free) SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION IN SHREWSBURY?

Students in Grades K-6 who reside 2 or more miles from their assigned school are eligible for town-paid (free) bus transportation. This determination is mandated by the State of Massachusetts (Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 68). All other students in Grades K-12 will have the option to purchase a bus pass. **All students, either eligible or fee-based will be required to complete an application form to receive a bus pass. This criteria is applicable to students in both public and Department of Education approved private schools (St. John's, St. Mary's, Montessori, Al Hamra, and Lilliput).**

HOW IS THE 2.0-MILE DISTANCE MEASURED?

The 2.0-mile distance is measured from the centerline of your parcel to the nearest entranceway of the school using the shortest means by public roadway. The School Department has a transportation software package called "Versatrans" that calculates this distance for all students. If you question the distance please contact the Transportation Coordinator.

WHAT IS THE FEE-BASED BUSING PROGRAM?

All students who are NOT eligible for town-paid busing will have the option to purchase a bus pass through the "Fee-Based Busing Program." (i.e. K-6 living less than two miles from the assigned school and all students grade 7-12, regardless of distance.) Passes for 2007-2008 school year are \$210.00 per student, \$420.00 family maximum. NO REFUNDS will be issued unless a student un-enrolls prior to the first day of school. Fees will not be prorated for one way or partial year. Fees apply to both public and private schools that do not meet eligibility requirements for town-paid busing.

IS THERE A MAXIMUM FEE PER FAMILY?

The maximum fee per family is \$420.00. Parents in the "fee-based" busing category pay for only the first two children in this category although remaining children in the family living at the same address must register for a bus pass but will ride free of charge under a family cap.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR "FEE-BASED" SCHOOL BUSING?

Beginning in early March each student will receive a bus pass application. Students wishing to purchase school bus transportation must complete the registration/application and return it with payment, no later than June 15, 2007. After this date a late fee of \$25.00 will be assessed. Online payments can be made through Unibank by logging onto the town website at www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools

DOES MY CHILD NEED A BUS PASS?

Yes – All bus students are required to carry their bus pass on a daily basis, beginning the first day of school. Even if the student is eligible for free busing a registration/application form must be completed and returned to the Transportation Office located at 100 Maple Ave. Not doing so could result in exclusion from the bus. We suggest attaching the pass to the backpack. This will keep the pass handy and allow the student to display it without delay. Bus passes will be mailed in late August directly to those students who have completed the application and paid the fee, if applicable.

WHAT IF MY CHILD LOSES THE BUS PASS?

Replacement bus passes may be purchased for a \$10.00 fee (no cash, checks only) at the School Department Transportation Office, located at 100 Maple Avenue, Shrewsbury, MA, 01545.

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHEN AND WHERE BUS STOPS WILL BE LOCATED?

Bus information and passes will be mailed approximately two weeks prior to school opening. The transportation program buses students to and from established neighborhood bus stops. For scheduling reasons buses are not able to stop at everyone's driveway, even if the bus is passing your residence. If you feel there is an extraordinary circumstance that would justify a re-evaluation of the bus location please put your concern in writing. After school opens and routes are established, we will review your concern however, this may take a few weeks.

CAN MY CHILD RIDE HOME ON ANOTHER BUS?

No. Students may only ride their assigned buses. Transporting students to social events, scouts, daycare or religious classes aboard a school bus that the student is not assigned will not be permitted. If there is a family emergency or medical situation, parents should notify the Transportation Coordinator and other transportation arrangements may be made.

WILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS HAVE WINTER BUS SERVICE?

No. Winter bussing is no longer available. Transportation is offered throughout the school year using the Bus Pass System.

I HAVE JOINT CUSTODY OF MY CHILD. CAN SHE/HE RIDE TWO DIFFERENT BUSES?

Students with parents who have 50/50 joint custody may ride two different buses under specific conditions. For 2 passes to be issued to 2 different Shrewsbury addresses, written documentation of 50/50 custody will be required. Please notify the Transportation Coordinator in writing of your request.

CAN A STUDENT'S CONDUCT RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM THE SCHOOL BUS?

Students are expected to behave in a manner, which will provide for optimum safety of the individual student as well as the safety of other students aboard the bus. When a student is reported for violating a safety rule in and around a school bus, school officials will review the situation with the student. Parents will be notified of the behavior. Depending on the severity of the offense or the frequency of violations, the student can: receive a warning, brief suspension from the bus or for the balance of the school year. If a student is participating in the "Fee Based Transportation Program" and is suspended from the bus, the fee WILL NOT BE REFUNDED. See the transportation website for the "Bus Discipline Procedures" document. Please review the policy with your child. Your acknowledgment of your review is required by initialing the appropriate box on the application.

IF I FEEL THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH STUDENT BEHAVIOR OR THE OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL BUS, TO WHOM SHOULD I REPORT?

Concerns relating to student behavior should be directed to the school principal. Concerns regarding drivers or levels of service should be directed to Transportation Coordinator, Drew Damien at 841-8408 or ddamien@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

Families with student's eligible for free or reduced lunch price are eligible for a free bus pass regardless of distance from school or grade level. These families check-off the appropriate block on the application and send in along with a \$10/family processing fee. These families will be cross-checked with our current rosters for free and reduced lunches. If you think you are eligible for free or reduced price lunches see the Free/Reduced Lunch Price application at www.shrewsbury-ma.gov/schools/central/schlunch/schoollunch

WHAT ARE THE PAYMENT TERMS?

For all currently enrolled students the payment deadline is June 15, 2007. Payment is due in full by check or money order only. NO CASH. An additional fee of \$25.00 will be assessed to payment received after June 15, 2007. Please note that any check returned due to insufficient funds or closed bank accounts will have a \$25 bank fee charged as a penalty to the check writer. Payment plans and/or partial payments will not be accepted. The fee for currently enrolled students who purchase a bus pass in the middle of the school year is \$210.00. No pro-rata bus passes will be sold for partial year service, morning or afternoon only service. The cost of a bus pass is \$210.00 regardless of the student's actual usage.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL NEEDS?

Special needs students attending out of district placements (outside the Town of Shrewsbury) and ride special vehicles or vans are NOT subject to the fee. Special needs students who attend Shrewsbury Public Schools are subject to the fee under the same provisions as other students unless they have "special transportation" by a "special vehicle" indicated in their Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P.). Special needs students with these two provisions in their I.E.P. are NOT subject to the fee.

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS A “504 PLAN”?

Students who have a 504 plan are subject to the fee under the same provisions as all other students.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS THE JUNE 15, 2006 APPLICATION DEADLINE?

ALL applications (fee-based and free) are due no later than June 15, 2007 at 5 p.m. Routes will be designed according to those applications received by this date. Applications received after that date requiring payment will be assessed a \$25.00 late fee. Applications will not be considered unless payment is received in full. All applications received after June 15, 2007, whether free or fee based, will be given consideration for seat space based upon availability.

HOW DO I REPORT SUSPECTED FRAUD?

If you suspect a student or parent to be involved in sharing bus passes, producing fraudulent passes, or riding without a pass, please report this to the Transportation Coordinator. Instances of confirmed fraud will be reported to the Police Department as theft and may result in permanent loss of bus riding privileges.

SHOULD WE EXPECT MORE CAR TRAFFIC AT THE SCHOOLS THIS FALL?

Yes. However, we strongly encourage parents to obtain a bus pass so as to minimize vehicular traffic at the Schools. At \$210.00 per year, it will cost you about a little more than \$1 per day to have your child bussed to and/or from school. Please consider this cost in comparison to what it will cost you in time and fuel for your car.